

P H O T O E S S A Y

Anglers don't view trout and trout fishing the way they did 40 years ago. When I was a boy, people fished from the bank or waded along a stream. They mainly used spinning tackle, and most of them killed the fish they caught. My dad carried a creel, and he used it.

But then anglers learned they could cover more water by fishing from a drift boat or raft. More people took up fly-fishing. And they started releasing their catch so the trout could be caught again. Today it's rare to see someone kill a trout, even when it's legal and biologically defensible.

Photographs that appear in books and magazines both reflect and influence the way anglers perceive trout fishing. As recently as the early 1980s, it was still common to see pictures of anglers hoisting their limits of dead trout. But then, responding to readers' growing conservation ethic, publications stopped running "stringer shots." The classic fishing photograph became a smiling angler kneeling in the shallows, left hand under the trout's head, the right holding the tail.

The images continue to change. Many photographers now skip the "grip-and-grin" payoff shots and focus on other aspects of trout fishing—the preparation, the stalk, the cast, the insects, the weather, the landscape. The camaraderie.

In the following pages, you'll find images that recently caught our eye, photos that represent new ways of looking at trout and trout fishing. Included are statements from three exceptional photographers who reveal just a bit about the images they look for during a shoot, and how they capture those scenes.

Their comments provide insight into the world of trout fishing photography, just as their images and those of other photographers depict the fish and the sport in ways we've never seen before.

—Tom Dickson, editor



BILLY DEJONG/IMAGES ON THE WILDSIDE



“Three-fourths of the time when I’m out doing photography, I’m not actually taking pictures; I’m just looking. Like with the image of the guy reflected in the water. I was watching him for a long time, and then I saw that reflection and thought it was such a cool view, one I’d never seen before. I’m always looking for something different, something out of the ordinary. And yes, of course, some of my shots are strange—too strange sometimes for magazines to use—but what the heck, they still make me happy. And you know what? That’s what I’m really doing more than anything: looking for images that make me happy.”

—Dušan Smetana, Bozeman



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: DUŠAN SMETANA; DUŠAN SMETANA; BRIAN & JENNY GROSSENBÄCHER; DANIEL J. COX; JEREMIE HOLLIMAN





“Whenever I have a camera in my hands, I find that I would rather take photographs than cast for fish. When I am taking photos, I never preplan or try to set up a shot. I find that if I just let people fish, then the shots will create themselves—I just have to be ready when they happen. I’ve only been a photographer for three years, but I’ve been a fishing guide since 1992, and I am on the water for more than 200 days a year. That gives me plenty of opportunities to shoot. More important, it has given me a chance to appreciate the grace and beauty that fly-fishing offers.”

—Brian Grossenbacher, Bozeman

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: MACNEIL LYONS; BRIAN & JENNY GROSSENBACHER; CHUCK & GALE ROBBINS





“I started photography about 12 years ago. Over the past few years, I’ve been doing more and more of my work underwater. It’s pretty exciting and fun to get in a wetsuit and float down a creek and watch trout in their natural surroundings. My photography expresses my feelings about trout and the aquatic world they live in. When you spend time with wildlife, you are able to gain their trust. They know you mean them no harm, and then they go about their natural business, and that’s what I try to photograph. I feel privileged to be allowed in there, into their world, to witness that.

—Michael Haring, *Big Sky*



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: MICHAEL HARING; BARRY & CATHY BECK; KELLY GORHAM; DUŠAN SMETANA; KELLY GORHAM

